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THE DE LAINCEL FUND FOR THE STUDY OF THE MAYA LANGUAGE AND ITS GRAPHIC SYSTEM.

BY WM. M. AUGNEY.

THE de Laincel Fund, so-named, after a relative, by a gentleman of Philadelphia, now residing in Mexico, who contributes handsomely to its support, has for its object a thorough study of the graphic system of the ancient Mayas, by collecting vocabularies of that language and its dialects, and obtaining reliable artistic reproductions, by means of photographs, of the ancient cities and mural inscriptions of Central America, also photographing and copying ancient manuscripts or other material which will be of service to students in this special field of research.

The work will be carried on under the direction of an advisory committee, to be chosen from among ethnologists who are authorities upon, and students of, the Maya language, its paleography and art.

The exploration of the fund will be carried on under the direction of Dr. Hilborne T. Cresson of Philadelphia, well known as an ethnologist in America and Europe. The result of his researches have at times been published by the Peabody Museum, where for the past five years he has been a special assistant, working under the direction of Professor F. W. Putnam of Harvard University. Dr. Cresson's artistic training at the Ecole des Beaux Arts, in the ateliers of the sculptor Alexander Dumont, and the painter J. Leon Gerome (his works having been exposed in the Salon of 1877), joined to that of an accomplished French and Spanish scholar, especially capacitates him for this line of research. He has also for some years past been studying the Maya language under the direction of so distinguished an authority as Professor Daniel G. Brinton, and a good basis has thus been obtained for future research.

The de Laincel Fund will act in conjunction with some of our leading American institutions, yet to be determined upon, or independently, as its patron may deem best. The work will be carried on during the healthy season in the south, adopting the plan already pursued by other exploring

parties—that of carrying out its investigations during those months which are best suited to the sanitary condition of its workers.

Secretary's office, 519 Spruce Street, Philadelphia, June 27.

CURRENT NOTES ON ANTHROPOLOGY. — IX.

[Edited by D. G. Brinton, M.D., LL.D.]

The Peruvian Languages

Now that the great work of Dr. E. W. Middendorf on the Peruvian languages has been brought to a conclusion by the publication of the sixth and last volume, that on the Muchik (or Chimu or Yunca) tongue, the high value of this contribution to American ethnology should be urged on the scientific world.

Dr. Middendorf is a medical man who practised his profession many years ago in various parts of Peru, making a study of the native dialects his favorite recreation. He thus became practically familiar with them as living tongues, and backed up that knowledge by an acquaintance with such literature as they possessed. The results of this long devotion are now before us in six large octavo volumes, published by Brockhaus, Leipzig, and counting up in all to nearly 2,400 pages of handsomely printed material. The languages considered are the Kechua, the Aymara, and the Chimu, with an appendix on the Chibcha. There is an ample supply of grammatical analyses, texts, phrases, and, of the Kechua, a copious Kechua-German-Spanish dictionary. That the Aymara and Chimu vocabularies are not arranged alphabetically must be regarded as a blemish. One of the volumes contains the original text and a German translation of the drama of Ollanta, believed by many to be a genuine specimen of a native, pre-Columbian, dramatic production. There are also many songs and specimens of prose writings in the same tongue. Taking Middendorf's practical observations along with Tschudi's "Organismus der Kechua Sprache," the student will find himself well equipped to master this interesting idiom.

The Orientation of Primitive Structures.

The study of the relative directions which the walls and angles of ancient structures bear to the cardinal points has scarcely yet received the attention from archæologists which it merits.

Several varieties of this "orientation," as it is termed, are to be found, each with its own meaning. The ancient Egyptian *mastabas* and pyramids have their sides facing the cardinal points. This arose from the desire of having the door in the centre of the eastern side to face the rising sun, and the western door, *sta*, to face the setting sun, as it was through the latter that the god Anubis conducted the soul to the other world. On the other hand, the Babylonians and Assyrians directed the angles, and not the sides, of their temples to the cardinal points, for what occult reason is not clear. Again, Mr. J. Walter Fewkes has found that the *kib-vas*, or sacred chambers, of the Tusayan Indians at the Moqui Pueblo are oriented north-east and south-west. This he at first thought was owing to the character of the bluff, but there are reasons to believe it of a ceremonial origin.

Some curious observations in this connection are reported by Mr. Robert M. Swan, about the Zimbabwe ruins, in the last number of the *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society*. He found a series of ornaments on the walls of the great temple so disposed that one group would receive directly the sun's rays at his rising and another at his setting at the period of the winter solstice, when these points in that